GEORGIAN NORWICH

ITS BUILDERS

By
STANLEY J. WEARING, F.R.I.B.A.

973/M/Eng.

from Monty.

Christmas.

1946

GEORGIAN NORWICH: ITS BUILDERS

Photo by] HOLKHAM HALL, NORFOLK [*Jarrold & Sons, Ltd.*

12H9

GEORGIAN NORWICH

ITS BUILDERS

By

STANLEY J. WEARING, F.R.I.B.A.

NORWICH

JARROLD & SONS LIMITED

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY JARROLD AND SONS LTD. NORWICH

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE ix

MATTHEW BRETTINGHAM 2

ROBERT BRETTINGHAM 6

THOMAS IVORY 11

THE METHODIST MEETING HOUSE 16

HOUSE AT THE GREAT HOSPITAL 19

THE OCTAGON CHAPEL 19

THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS 25

THE THEATRE 27

NOS. 25 TO 35 SURREY STREET 33

THE ARTILLERY BARRACKS 35

NO. 31 KING STREET 36

WILLIAM IVORY 37

WILLIAM WILKINS 42

THOMAS RAWLINS 53

CONCLUSION 56

INDEX 65

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

HOLKHAM HALL . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

WALL MONUMENT IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH 4

WALL MONUMENT IN THE CATHEDRAL . . 14

METHODIST MEETING HOUSE, BISHOPGATE . 16

HOUSE IN ENTRANCE COURT, THE GREAT HOSPITAL 18

THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, EXTERIOR 20

THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, INTERIOR 22

THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, EXTERIOR 24

THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, INTERIOR 26

THE OLD THEATRE 28

Nos. 25 to 35 SURREY STREET 32

THE ARTILLERY BARRACKS 34

No. 31 KING STREET 36

ST. HELEN'S PLACE 38

PEW IN ST. HELEN'S CHURCH 40

WALL MONUMENT IN THE CATHEDRAL . . 54

PREFACE

WHEN re-reading the notes of a lecture on "Norwich Architects of the Eighteenth Century," which I gave in 1923, under the auspices of the Norfolk and Norwich Association of Architects, I felt that by amplifying them and putting them into book form they would not only preserve the results of considerable research, but might be the means of obtaining further particulars from others who are interested in the subject. Already the records of eighteenth-century buildings and builders are fast disappearing, and soon it will be much more difficult to obtain detailed information.

To the many friends who have willingly helped me in various ways I record my grateful thanks; especially do I thank the Editor of the *Norwich Mercury* for facilities to consult the earlier files of that paper, Mr. G. A. Stephen (City Librarian, Norwich), Mr. Walter Rye, Mr. Walter R. Rudd (Hon. Secretary, Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society), Mr. Frederick Johnson (Assistant Secretary, Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society), Mr. Ernest Kent, and Mr. Leonard Bolingbroke.

STANLEY J. WEARING

November, 1926

GEORGIAN NORWICH

ITS BUILDERS

THE period 1750 to 1780 has been called the heyday of the prosperity of Norwich. That there was a considerable amount of building carried out about this time is evidenced by the many beautiful "Georgian" buildings which happily still exist. Of the Georgian architects in Norwich, Thomas Ivory stands out pre-eminently, and the present writer is glad to take this opportunity of recording his work and of paying a tribute to his memory. He built well, with simple dignity, and gathered round him other craftsmen which resulted in the erection of buildings of outstanding merit. Before Ivory, however, the brothers Brettingham executed important work which requires notice.

MATTHEW BRETTINGHAM

MATTHEW BRETTINGHAM was born in Norwich in 1699, and died there in 1769. He was the second son of Launcelot Brettingham, who was a mason living in St. Giles Parish. The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that " he was a pupil of William Kent, with whom he was engaged in the erection of Holkham Hall. He travelled as a youth in Europe, publishing books on France, the Low Countries, Alsatia, Germany, Savoy, Tyrol, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain. Holkham Hall was begun in 1729 from plans by Kent, who died in 1748. Brettingham then superintended the building until its completion in 1764. In 1761 Brettingham published *Plans, Elevations, and Sections of Holkham in Norfolk, the seat of the Earl of Leicester*, and his nephew published one later, but in neither of these editions is the authorship of Kent acknowledged. It is possible that Brettingham modified Kent's designs, as they were being carried out so long after his death, but the general note is the then fashionable ' Vitruvian ' style, of which Kent was master.

" Brettingham's other works were Norfolk House

(now 1a St. James's Square, London), in 1742; Langley Park, Norfolk, 1740–44; north and east fronts of Charlton House, Wiltshire; and a house in Pall Mall afterwards known as Cumberland House, 1760–67. He visited Italy again in 1748–50, travelling at first with Stuart and Revett, but the investigation of these well-known architects do not seem to have influenced his work; he confined himself to the heavy Palladian style."

He lived in St. Augustine's Parish, Norwich, occupying property belonging to the Great Hospital, which comprised farm buildings and land. The Committee Books of the Great Hospital bear evidence that he was either not very business-like, or did not find his profession a very lucrative one, for in 1737–38 and 1739 his name appears in them under circumstances of which the following minute is an example: "Ordered that Matthew Brettingham forthwith settle his account of rent and pay all arrears thereof to the Treasurer of the Great Hospital and that he be served with a copy of this order." Again in 1745–47 and 1748 are similar notices, and in these cases he is to "be sued" if he does not pay.

The only building traceable to him in this City is the Shirehouse, for in P. Browne's *History*

of Norwich we learn that " Matthew Brettingham built the Shirehouse in 1749 of black flint and stone after the fire of 1746." This building was taken down, and the present one erected in 1822–23 from designs by William Wilkins. It was refaced in 1913.

There is a large stone to the memory of Brettingham on the east wall of the north aisle in St. Augustine's Church, which reads :

" In a Vault beneath the Altar
is deposited the body of
MATTHEW BRETTINGHAM Senr.
of this City, Architect,
who departed this earthly residence
Augst. 19, 1769. Aged 70 years.
Also MARTHA, his faithful and much lov'd Wife
who surviv'd him 14 Years and finish'd a life of
Piety and exemplary goodness April 16, 1783
at the Age of 86.
As a Man his Integrity,
liberal Spirit and benevolence of Mind,
endear'd him to all that knew his Virtues,
and his Talents as an Architect.
To the Patronage and esteem of the Nobility,
the most distinguish'd
for their love of Palladian Architecture.

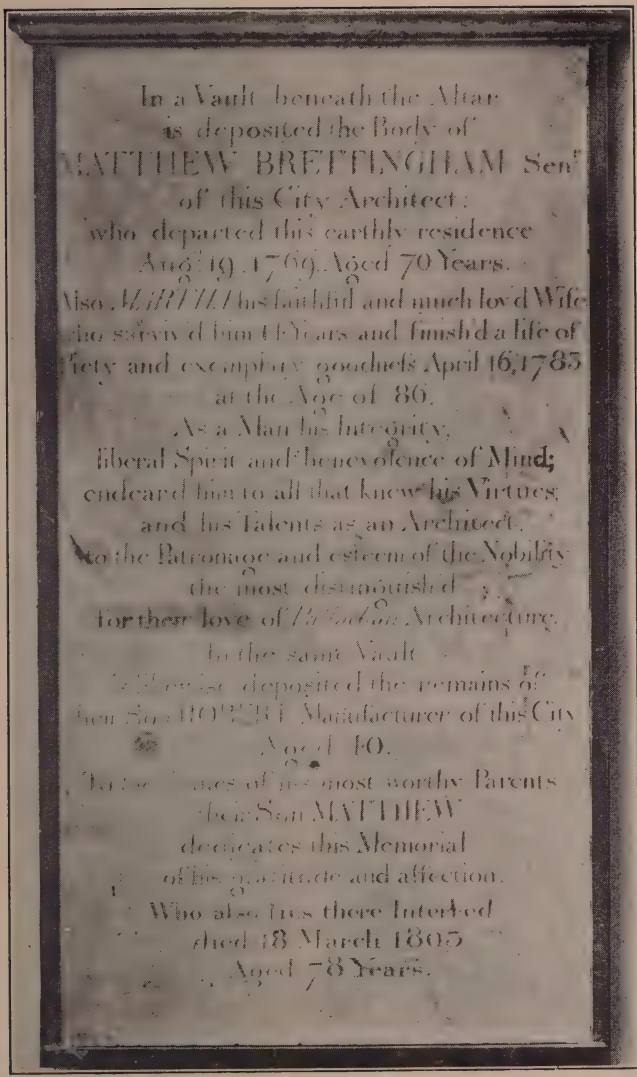
In a Vault beneath the Altar
is deposited the Body of
MATTHEW BRETTINGHAM Sen^r
of this City Architect:
who departed this earthly residence
Aug^t 19. 1769. Aged 70 Years.
Also Mary his faithful and much lov'd Wife
who survivd him 14 Years and finish'd a life of
Piety and exemplary goodness April 16, 1785
at the Age of 86.
As a Man his Integrity,
liberal Spirit and Benevolence of Mind;
endeard him to all that knew his Virtues;
and his Talents as an Architect,
to the Patronage and esteem of the Nobility
the most distinguish'd
for their love of the Ancient Architecture.
In the same Vault
is likewise deposited the remains of
Ann Sons Manufacturer of this City
Aged 40.
To the Virtues of the most worthy Parents
their Son MATTHEW
dedicates this Memorial
of his gratitude and affection.
Who also lies there Interred
died 18 March 1805
Aged 78 Years.

Photo by] WALL MONUMENT, ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH, NORWICH [*E. Coe & Son*

In the same Vault
is likewise deposited the remains of
their Son ROBERT Manufacturer of this City
Aged 40.
To the Virtues of his most worthy Parents
their Son MATTHEW
dedicates this Memorial
of his gratitude and affection.
Who also lies there Interred
died 18 March 1803
Aged 78 Years."

His son Matthew was an architect, as was also his nephew Robert Furze Brettingham, the latter having a large practice in London.

ROBERT BRETTINGHAM

ROBERT BRETTINGHAM was born in 1696, and died in 1768. He was the eldest son of Launcelot Brettingham, and brother to Matthew. The two sons took up their freedom in Norwich on the same day, in 1719, both as bricklayers, and both as the apprentices of their father.

The only building noticed in this City in association with Robert Brettingham's name is the Octagon Chapel. The details given in the old Minute Books, which commence when the proposed new building was first under discussion, are as follows:

At the first Committee held on October 17, 1753, it is noted that Robert Brettingham was present and subscribed, at that meeting, £30 towards carrying on the work.

At the next one, a week later, he was appointed architect and surveyor of the new building, and the Committee agreed to his own terms of 3 per cent. A fortnight later, on November 7th, he was ordered to produce "within a fortnight two different designs of plans and elevations to be laid before all the subscribers." Such an order

would lead us to think that he was not getting on fast enough for the Committee's satisfaction, but it was complied with from the point of view of time, though the Committee and not the subscribers were called together. The minute entered records that he "did now produce a plan and Elevation of a new Meeting House [not two different designs it will be noticed] to which he is desired to add a plan of the pews, &c., of the Ground Floor, and also of the Galleries and as particular Estimate as he can of the Expence of the new Building." The next week a general meeting was held. It is impossible to say precisely, but I should judge that the general meeting was the turning point which soon led to the termination of Brettingham's commission, for we find that at this meeting a Committee, called a Select Committee, was formed to receive and adjust plans, and decide which plan or plans were to be laid before a General Meeting of the Subscribers; furthermore, "that the Order of the 24th October for employing Mr. Brettingham as Architect and Surveyor of the New Building be left to the direction of the Select Committee." Up to this point we have only heard of one plan, and that one Brettingham's. It would appear, therefore, that someone else had submitted a plan which found more favour. This

supposition is strengthened by the fact that Brettingham's appointment was brought up again. The Select Committee met in two days, when "Mr. Brettingham laid his plans before the Committee, who inspected the same." They asked him if he had ordered any bricks from "Mushold" or elsewhere, as the Committee would take them if he had done so, and agreed that he and a Mr. Stangroome should serve the lime equally for the new building.

Why was the Select Committee formed? Why did they meet within two days, offer to take over any bricks the architect had ordered, and let him supply a portion of the lime? Surely it was because they were not satisfied with his plan, or, as stated, because someone had privately produced a better one. The little consolation prize of letting him supply the lime was, we might imagine, refused haughtily and with dignity, because at the end we see that he was only paid a sum of £10 10s. for drawings (or as his receipt says "in giving my advice on Building a New Chapple"), and the fact that his name is not again mentioned, nor the £30 he promised at the first meeting forthcoming, would lead us to think that the end of his engagement was not quite so happy as the commencement.

As will be seen in the next chapter, the

Octagon Chapel was designed by Thomas Ivory.

It is interesting to note that just previous to Robert Brettingham's appointment the following advertisement appeared in the *Norwich Mercury*, August 4, 1753 : " As the said Mr. Brettingham is leaving off his business of Mason, he intends to act in the character of an Architect, in drawing plans and elevations, giving estimates, or putting out work, or measuring up any sort of building, for any Gentleman in the County."

Advertisements in 1757 and 1760 show that he acted in the capacity of house and estate agent, and another in 1753 that at one time he resided in Elm Hill.

In the south aisle of St. Giles Church there is a slab bearing the following inscription :

" Under this stone is interred
the Body of
ROBERT BRETTINGHAM Gent.
one of the Sheriffs for this City
in the year mdcclxiv
He died xi May mdcclxviii
aged lxxii years

Also
LYDIA KILLINGWORTH
relict of the above
ROBERT BRETTINGHAM
she died x May mdcclxxxii
aged lxxix years."

THOMAS IVORY

IT is to the genius of Thomas Ivory that we owe some of the finest buildings erected in this City during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. He was born in 1709, and died in 1779. The place of his birth I am unable to give. The entry in the Freemen's book in the Muniment Room of the Norwich Corporation under date September 21, 1745, shows that he purchased his freedom as a carpenter, which signifies that he was neither born nor apprenticed in Norwich. The Freemen's book also records a William Ivory "Joyner" as purchasing his freedom on January 15, 1730. I have no record of who this man was.

The earliest note about Thomas Ivory that I have been able to find is one in the Committee Book of the Great Hospital, which proves that just six years after he took up his Freedom—at the age of 42—he was appointed to do all the carpenter's work for the Great Hospital "in the room of Agabus Molden," which appointment he held to the time of his death. It would appear that he was a man of some substance at this time, for the next year, in 1752, he was granted a 99 years' lease of property and land

at the Great Hospital, with a yearly rent of £17, and had to erect buildings thereon to the value of £300.

In December, 1753, the proposal to build a new Presbyterian chapel gave him an opportunity, of which he took good advantage. This building, now known as the "Octagon," together with others he built, are dealt with separately, and can be enumerated as follows:

Methodist Meeting House, Bishopgate	1751–52
House on the west side of Entrance Court of the Great Hospital	1752–53
The Octagon	1754–56
The Assembly Rooms (now Girls' High School)	1754
The Theatre (now demolished)[1]	1757
Nos. 29 to 35 Surrey Street	1761–62
Nos. 25 and 27 Surrey Street	*circa* 1771
The Artillery Barracks	1771–72
No. 31 King Street (now demolished)	*circa* 1774

The following are leases entered into by him, in addition to the one previously mentioned :—

21st May, 1755, from the Corporation, part of the Great Hospital Meadow for 97 years for an annual rent of 20s.

[1] Thomas Ivory, Proprietor from 1757–68.

February, 1758, from the Corporation, Messuage and dwelling-house in the Lower Close for 18 years at an annual rent of £6.

20th February, 1761, from the Corporation, a narrow piece of waste ground adjoining the City walls, 282 feet in length, lying west of and adjoining Brazen Door Gates, for 99 years at an annual rent of 20s. (This lease includes land as far as the garden wall of Thomas Ivory, thus showing that the ground on which the Artillery Barracks stand belonged to him).

5th September, 1768, from the Corporation, a narrow piece of land adjoining the City walls, 83 yards 1 ft. in length, lying east of and adjoining Brazen Door Gates. Another, a piece of land outside the wall between it and the King's highway, 70 yards east to west, and 11 yards 2 ft. in breadth.

5th October, 1774, from the Corporation, of Messuages, yards, gardens in the Lower Close for 21 years at an annual rent of £15.

According to the *Dictionary of National Biography* he sent in competition drawings for the erection of the Royal Exchange, Dublin, but I doubt if this is correct.

A torn portion of a letter in the possession of Mr. Fred. Johnson, Assistant Secretary of the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society, states

that he died of heart disease on the 28th day of August, 1779. A fine memorial tablet [1] to his memory, which was formerly on the east wall of the north transept of the Cathedral, is now in the triforium on the north side by the organ ; it is inscribed as follows :

"To the memory of
Thomas Ivory
Who died on the 28th of August 1779
Aged 70 years
And of Hannah his wife
Who died on the 18th of June 1787
Aged 80 years."

J. Ivory Fecit.

In his will, dated July 2, 1775, he is described as a builder and timber merchant. He left his property in St. Peter per Mountergate and St. John Timberhill to his wife and daughter, all other properties to his son William, and nothing to his son Thomas.

[1] This monument was executed by J. Ivory, a nephew of Thomas Ivory. He is described in the Freemen's book as a stonecutter. Another monument done by this craftsman is to be seen on one of the piers on the north side of the chancel in the Cathedral; one in a similar position in St. George's, Tombland; also another in St. Michael at Coslany. All of them are beautifully designed and executed.

Photo by] WALL MONUMENT, THE CATHEDRAL, NORWICH [*E. Coe & Son*

In 1756 he lived in St. Martin's-at-Oak, as the following advertisement, which appeared in the *Norwich Mercury*, May 1756, shows :

"To be LETT

"A house ſituate in St. Martin's at Oak, now in the Occupation of Mr. Thomas Ivory, five rooms on a Floor, Hall, three Parlours, and a Kitchen, with a fine Yard, large Waſhhouse, good Stable for two Horſes, commodious Work-Rooms three Tier adjoining to the Dwelling Houſe, with a very neat Garden, well planted and genteely laid out, with a new-built Wall round it and large Summer Room neatly Saſh'd ; at the End of the Yard is large Work-Rooms of two Tier, which have Communication next Gilding Craſe ; quite commodious for either private Gentlemen, Manufacturer, or Wool Factor, or to be Let in two Parts, in ſuch caſe can add another handſome Garden wall'd round to it.

"The Premiſes to be viewed any Day.

"N.B. As Mr. Ivory is going this Summer to live at his Timber Yard in Biſhopgate-ſtreet, where he carries on his ſeveral Branches of Trade as uſual."

From the same source we learn that in 1750 he was a Steward of "The Sons of Flora."

"THE SONS of FLORA will hold their Annual VENISON FEAST at the Maid's Head in St. Simon's, on Wedneſday the 25th of this Inſtant; Where all Gentlemen, who are admirers of the Beauties of Nature, are deſired to come and view the greateſt variety of New and Well-blown CARNATIONS that this Year produce.

"Tickets to be had at Gray's Coffee-Houſe, the Maid's Head, or of the Gentlemen whoſe Names are hereunder ſubſcribed, at 4s. each.

"Sir RANDALL WARD, Bart. Preſident.
Mr. ROBERT HARVEY,
Mr. PETER GREEVES,
Mr. ROBERT DAVEY,
Mr. THOMAS IVORY } Stewards.

"N.B. Stewards are provided for the Year enſuing."

The obituary notice in the *Norwich Mercury* dated September 4, 1779, is as follows:—"On Saturday last died in the 70th year of his life Mr. Thomas Ivory, architect, of whom it is sufficient to say, Let his works speak for him.'"

The Methodist Meeting House

The Methodist Meeting House, Bishopgate, must have been the first building in Norwich

Photo by] METHODIST MEETING HOUSE, BISHOPGATE, NORWICH [*Jarrold & Sons, Ltd.*

with which Ivory was connected. The reasons for its being built, also the local leader in the Cause, make interesting reading, but this is not the place to go into them in detail. The following advertisement in the *Norwich Mercury* dated November 30, 1751, throws some light on the troublous times and establishes the fact that Thomas Ivory was responsible for the building :

" MR. WHEATLEY, the Methodiſt Preacher, having taken himſelf away from his Dear Hearers, if the Proprietors of the Ground in St. Martin's of Palace lately bought for the erecting of a Tabernacle, after the deſign of the Ingenious Architect, Mr. I——ry, will diſpoſe of the ſame, they may hear of a Purchaſer, by a Line directed for A. B. at Gray's Coffee-Houſe."

On August 8, 1752, the following advertisement appeared :

" The Methodiſts here ſeem'd reſolved to proſecute all their Oppoſers, with the utmoſt Severity, and for that Purpoſe had a Perſon from London, to manage their Proſecutions, and Council were feed ; Indictments were accordingly preferr'd againſt Charles Spinſby, William Wilſon, Lazarus Burton, and William Foſter,

jun. (a little Boy) for felonſly demoliſhing a Building ſet apart for religious Worſhip, on the 24th of May and alſo another againſt John Chamberlin, Thomas Legget, John Taylor, John Benfather and William Foſter jun. for the like Offence, the 26th of January laſt. Theſe Bills were returned by the Grand Jury, NO TRUE BILLS, After which the Methodiſts preferred a third Bill for the ſame Offence againſt the above ſaid Charles Spinſby, William Wilſon, Lazarus Burton, and William Foſter, junior, for deſtroying a Building of Mr. Thomas Ivory's which was alſo returned NO TRUE BILL. Three Bills; one for Felony and two for Perjury were preferr'd and found TRUE BILLS, againſt three Methodiſts, being their principal Witneſſes.

"N.B. One Brook, who was committed and iron'd in January laſt, for pulling down the ſaid Building, had no Bill preferred againſt him."

The building was opened on April 14, 1753, by Mr. Whitfield, and at the same time this notice appears in *Norfolk and Norwich Notes and Queries*. It is stated that "A house adjoining the Tabernacle is building for Mr. Wheatley." I presume this is the one on the left hand side approaching the chapel, and in all probability is the work of Thomas Ivory.

Photo by] HOUSE IN ENTRANCE COURT AT THE GREAT HOSPITAL [*Jarrold & Sons, Ltd.*

House at the Great Hospital

We have already noticed that Thomas Ivory was, in 1751, appointed as carpenter by the Trustees of the Great Hospital, and that he was granted a 99 years' lease of land and had to erect buildings thereon to the value of £300. The following extract from "Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring Concerning Charities 1833–34" would seem to bear out the fact that the above building was the one referred to as it is typical of his work:

In the lease "of 1752, £300 only was required to be laid out; it appears that the cost of the buildings actually erected on the premises could not have fallen far short of £1,000, and it is probable that this expenditure was the consideration for the extension of the term in 1792 and 1794."

The Octagon Chapel

We are fortunate in being able to give detailed particulars of Ivory's associations with the growth of this building, because the Minute Books which were kept at the time are still available. His appointment at the Great Hospital—three years before—was only for jobbing carpenter's work,

and consequently one is anxious to ascertain particulars of his training, for it cannot be questioned that this building is one of great merit, and if he had done nothing else, it proves him to be a craftsman of no mean order.

We have seen that Robert Brettingham was appointed architect for this building, and submitted a design which was not approved. Subsequent events can best be explained by extracts from the Minutes, as follows :

7th December, 1753. The Committee received a plan and 2 Elevations from Mr. Lee a Carpenter, also an anonymous plan and Elevation.

Again meeting three days after this they " received a plan and section of the roof from Mr. Ivory who is to bring an Elevation of the South Front on Friday next." (The main entrance is on the south front.)

It is a great pity that the Minutes of these two meetings were not more fully entered, because we should like to know whose the anonymous plan was, and whether this was the birth of the octagonal plan. I should judge that the anonymous plan was Ivory's, and by the wording of the Minutes and subsequent events that this was the first time an octagonal shape was suggested. If it was not so, I do not see any adequate reason for the " section of the Roof " ; furthermore, in an

Photo by] THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, EXTERIOR [*Jarrold & Sons, Ltd.*

octagonal plan only the south front would be required. Both Mr. Lee and Mr. Ivory had been connected with the building from the beginning, in the work of pulling down, and they were also commissioned for portions of the carpenter's work in the new building, thus being closely in touch with all developments.[1]

It was on December 10, 1753, that Mr. Ivory produced his "Plan and section of the roof," and we find that four days later, obedient to commands, he brought these with an elevation, but at the same meeting a Mr. Rawlins—who ultimately did the stonemason's work for the new building—produced a plan and elevation; in addition there was a plan and also elevations from Mr. Lee, all of which were left with the Committee.

[1] Regarding Mr. Lee, I have never seen any previous mention of his name, except that he was admitted as a Freeman in 1738 (Ivory was admitted 1745), and therefore it seems somewhat strange that at a later stage he was ordered to examine the wood at Mr. Ivory's for the new building, and reported that neither had he "sufficient quantity nor was the quality good enough."

The fact that this report was made when the question of whose design was to be accepted was still under consideration is—shall we say?—interesting. In the last statement of accounts we find that Mr. Lee was paid £1,284 5s. for work done, just £8 5s. more than was paid to Mr. Ivory. Neither of them appeared to be paid anything for plans. A Commission of Bankruptcy was issued against Mr. Lee, the Commissioners sitting on July 26, 1754, in order to make a final dividend.

These drawings of Mr. Lee's were undoubtedly those he had deposited a week before, and were for a rectangular building, because at the next meeting—a week later—" Mr. Lee had orders to proceed on drawing an Octangular Plan, Elevation, section of the roof and estimate of the same." Mr. Ivory was not letting the grass grow under his feet however, for at this meeting he produced a model of a roof for an octangular plan. What a lot one can read into that meeting! What should we think to-day of a committee ordering one man to copy another's idea? For, as before explained, I believe Ivory started the octagonal plan, and again we must admire Ivory's astuteness in appreciating the value that a model would be to a committee of laymen. Mr. Lee was evidently not so nimble with his pencil as was Thomas Ivory, for he informed the Committee a week later " that he expected some drawings from Mr. Robert Morris of London, with his Remarks upon the Octagon Plan [this remark again proves that the octagon idea was not his]; and that he deferred finishing his own Plans till he received the same." Considering how difficult it was to get to London—or, for that matter, to conduct a correspondence thereto—in those days, it is evident that Mr. Lee must have been very active, not intending, if he could help

Photo by] THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, INTERIOR [*Jarrold & Sons, Ltd.*

it, to let his fellow-craftsman oust him from the honour of having his design accepted. Mr. Rawlins also exhibited a new front elevation for the octagon plan ; it is not recorded whether this man's design was an octagon, though from the wording I should think that it was. When once this idea had been introduced it was evidently copied. Mr. Ivory brought his model again " and had orders to finish the walls, Portico and all the outside in 3 weeks."

At the next meeting, on January 7, 1754, the London effort was produced ; Mr. Morris must have worked hard at it, for as the result of two weeks' work he sent two plans and elevations of a parallelogram (the two plans are evidently of the ground floor and gallery) and two plans and elevation of an octagon with sections of the roof, for which he charged eight guineas. (From the accounts we find that the Committee paid this fee, despite the fact that they were done at Mr. Lee's instructions.) Mr. Lee was ordered to " bring an estimate of the whole for an Octagon Plan." The estimate, of course, would be for Mr. Morris's design, the parallelogram idea being evidently out of the question.

Meetings continued to be held every week, and competition between the three aspirants was keen. Mr. Rawlins did not intend to give up his

possible chance of a commission, for he brought a new elevation for the octagon plan; Mr. Lee produced an estimate for the whole expense of the projected building, and Mr. Ivory displayed his completed model, the cost of his building being estimated by a Mr. Hawkes, surveyor. After careful consideration by the Committee a meeting of the congregation was called for February 20, 1754, when the Committee reported "their whole proceedings which were approved." Though it is not stated, they doubtless recommended Mr. Ivory's design, for the Minutes state that the "Moddle" was exhibited, "approved and ordered to be put in Execution Immediately."

So Thomas Ivory won this eighteenth-century competition, but beyond the honour of it and the fact that his name—and his only—went down to posterity in connection with the building of it, he was treated exactly the same as others in carrying out the work, had to sign the same articles, and, as we have already seen, did not receive so much for work done as his rival, Lee.

The first stone was laid on February 25, 1754, by Dr. John Taylor, and the first sermon preached in it by him on May 12, 1756.

Photo by] THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, EXTERIOR (NOW GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL) [*The Author*

The Assembly Rooms

The records we have of this building are unfortunately very scanty, though the following extract culled from a statement by William Ivory in the "Committee Book of the Proprietors of the Theatre" is interesting: "Many of the principal Inhabitants of Norwich having received a compliment from the late Earl of Buckinghamshire of the Conveyance to them, on an easy purchase, of his Estate in Norwich, called Chapple Field House, for the purpose of erecting publick places of Entertainment for the County and City, the new Assembly rooms were erected thereon and finished by many Gentlemen, who then called themselves, the Proprietors of Chapple Field Estate."

At the time it was built (1754), Norwich was in a very flourishing condition, for, to quote only one writer, Mr. A. D. Bayne, in his *History of Norwich* (1869): "The most prosperous time was from 1750–1780. . . . Norwich was, at this time, in a more flourishing state as regards trade than it has ever since been known. Wages were not high, but employment was universal." Despite this fact, the building of the Assembly Rooms was unquestionably a big undertaking.

The only places available for assemblies, entertainments, and their like, were in rooms appertaining to the many fine " inns " which abounded in the City. That one person, anyhow, considered it an unwise undertaking is borne out by the following extract from an old diary published in *Norfolk & Norwich Notes and Queries*, September, 1902: "The New Building for the Assemblies, etc., where the old house stood, is a very large, tall, grand affair, by far the tallest in the City. I have not mentioned these things to our honour, but really to our shame, and must also add to our madness too, seeing trade is so very sickly, and nobody knows when it will recover." In view of my previous quotation, we must conclude that this individual was somewhat of a pessimist.

A number of authors in their books on Norwich state that the Assembly Rooms were designed by Thomas Ivory, and the assertion is substantiated by the fact that the great man saw fit to have his initials cast on the face of the heads of the rainwater pipes, as can be seen to-day.

The planning of the rooms is simple and direct, and excellent craftsmanship is displayed in the elegant finishings. A portion of the Rooms is built on walls which, many years before, formed

Photo by] THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, INTERIOR (NOW GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL) [*E. Coe & Son*

part of the buildings in connection with the great Chapel in the Fields.

This is not the place to recount some of the festive scenes transacted within these walls. Suffice it to say that for 120 years—before it was adapted as a school—all the important functions took place here. Time has served to mellow the materials used, and the good workmanship put into it has indeed stood the test of time.

The Theatre

The inception of the Theatre is best explained in the words of Ivory's son William, which are culled from the "Committee Book of the Proprietors of the Theatre," where the following is written in his own hand, under date February 11, 1782:

"The Proprietors of Chapple Field Estate after having compleated so elegant a reception for Company (the Assembly Rooms),—were desirous *of erecting a Theatre for acting of Plays* upon the same Estate, after the model of one of the King's Theatres in London,—but were deterred from it, from the Sum of Money they had already expended in the new building of the Assembly House &c.,—and therefore encouraged Mr. Thomas Ivory to undertake this new idea

[at that time, the Company of Comedians in Norwich, performed plays in a small House, fitted up only with common benches and two Stage boxes, without any other proper accommodation for Company],—Mr. Ivory being a publick spirited Man, with great activity of Mind and resolution, and great knowledge in his business as a Master builder, and employing at that time a considerable number of Workmen, and having always on his own premises, a large Assortment of Deals and Timber, being considerably employed in the profession of a Merchant in Exporting the Norwich Manufactory and other English Manufactories into the Northern Countries and Importing from thence large Quantities of Deals, Timber, Iron, &c., into this Country—he was induced, with this knowledge of business, and from this assistance in being provided with all the necessary building Articles, and from a noble principle of publick spirit,—*to oblige, the general wish and request* and with *the promise of all kinds of countenance and support*,—from *the principal Inhabitants*, to build this Theatre,—which was finished with every possible degree of Elegance and Convenience, and furnished with Scenes painted by one of the most eminent Masters.

" Mr. Ivory then engaged the former Company

THE OLD THEATRE

of Comedians, to perform plays &c., in this new Theatre, and agreed with the former proprietor of this Company, and purchased of him, all his Scenes, Wardrobe of Cloaths, and all other his right and title, to all the Leases, Scenes, &c.,—throughout the different Playhouses in the Circuit, in which the Norwich Comedians performed Plays, &c.,—throughout the Counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex,—the Norwich Theatre thus compleated, was opened for publick Exhibition in January, 1758—at a considerable advantage to the then performers of the Company, as they then received exclusive of the advantage derived from their benefit plays, double the sum in the Norwich Season, to what they have received, upon an Average from the then preceeding Ten Years :—In 1764 Mr. Ivory was induced by the Company of Comedians & at the earnest request of the Inhabitants of Colchester, to build a regular Theatre there,—as at that time, the Comedians had only a temporary building, erected in the Town Hall, whenever they went to Colchester, to perform plays in,—this building was erected this Year & elegantly fitted up with new Scenery, painted by an eminent painter in London :—there being now a regular Theatre in Norwich for the Winter Season, & a smaller one at Colchester, for the Summer Expedition,—and

other Playhouses on Lease in the Circuit,—it gave an opportunity to encrease the emoluments to the performers by making it, from *a sharing*, to a *Salary Company*,—which gave that degree of encouragement to performers of Merit,—that the scheme commanded, & was supported by the best Actors, out of London.—In the year 1768—after having expended considerable sum's of Money, in forming and compleating, the improvements in the Entertainments of the Stage, Mr. Ivory procured an Act of Parliament to obtain the Grant of the Royal Protection, to the Theatre in Norwich,—and thus having with unwearied attention and great Expence compleated this scheme, —which at the request of the publick in 1757—and devoting Eleven Years to the forming and improving it into a regular stage, he wish'd to return it back to the publick, and not to continue the sole proprietor of it longer, than he had compleated, what he had been so earnestly requested, in behalf of the publick to attempt,—and therefore offered his whole Theatrical Estate to Publick sale, to be divided into Thirty shares,—reserving two shares to himself, & proposed to dispose of Twenty Eight Shares only,—which were immediately purchased."

Then follows a list of the Proprietors, his entry closing with : "*A short state of facts of the rise*

and progress of the Norwich Stage, which I presume to hope, will not find the disapprobation of the Proprietors,—such a Compliment is due in this instance to *the Memory of a Man, worthy in every part of his Character, of unwearied diligence & spirit in what he undertook*,—and of *that firm resolution, which only could have produced, so perfect a system of Theatrical Entertainments, as was perfected under his direction*,—these sentiments, are due to his Memory, and therefore I have no reserve in writing them,—I Am, &c.—

"Feb. 12, 1782. Wm. Ivory."

"A feeling of affectionate gratitude to a deceased Parent,—has directed me to dedicate the preceeding facts,—as a Memento, to the Honor of His Memory."

"Wm. Ivory."

At the opening of the Theatre the following notices appeared in the *Norwich Mercury*, October 22, 1757, and December 17, 1757:

"We are informed that the new Theatre now Building by Mr. Thomas Ivory (for Plays and Muſical Entertainments) under the direction of Mr. Collins, will not only be the moſt convenient, but the beſt calculated both for ſight and ſound,

of any Theatre in Europe; and that ſeveral Abſurdities, and ſhocking Improprieties, common to the Theatres, will be avoided, from the Conſtruction of the Stage, and the diſpoſition of the Decorations."

"To all Gentlemen and Ladies.

"The Proprietor of the NEW-THEATRE, humbly Requeſts that no Gentlemen or Ladies would deſire Admittance till the ſame is quite finiſhed; as the Buſineſſ they are now engaged in there, will receive great Injury and be much incommoded thereby; and as he has given this publick Notice, hope no Gentlemen or Ladies will give themſelves the Trouble of going for that Purpoſe till the Houſe is opened, or take it amiſs in caſe of Refuſal of Admittance."

The Building required an extension in 1769, for the Committee Book states: "Mr. Thos. Ivory presented a Plan for an additional Building on the South side for placing Scenes and other properties in, this was approved and he was ordered to purchase and provide the necessary materials and employ such Workmen as he shall think proper." At the same time he was "desired to give his directions for curing the chimneys in

Photo by] NOS. 25 TO 35 SURREY STREET [*Jarrold & Sons, Ltd.*

the Dressing Rooms from Smoak, and that the same be forthwith done." His efforts were apparently not successful, for two years later the matter again came up before the Committee. His name appears in the Minutes up to the time of his death.

The Theatre underwent further alterations and additions in 1799, when Wm. Wilkins (another architect) became proprietor. It was pulled down in 1825, when the present building was erected.

Nos. 25 to 35 Surrey Street

This block of buildings must be dealt with in two divisions: (1) Nos. 25 and 27; and (2) Nos. 29, 31, 33, and 35. Numbers 29 to 35 are the older of the two blocks, and were built on a site purchased by Thomas Ivory from a Dr. Peck for £262 10s., in December, 1760, containing "by Estimation" two acres. (Dr. Peck was unable to sign the deed; after his mark there is a note "being Lame in his right Hand.") The exact boundary of the two acres mentioned is difficult to define. That it was bounded on the north by Surrey Street (then Newgate), and on the south by Bull Lane (then The Mews), and on the east by All Saints Green (then Rodney Street), is almost certain. This only leaves the

west boundary to determine, and reference to the ordnance plan shows that two acres would comprise (approximately) the land on which stand Nos. 25 and 27 Surrey Street. This land was then under different ownership.

That these houses were commenced immediately after the land had been bought we are able to prove through the care and interest of Mr. J. C. Tingey, an archæologist. When the porch to No. 31 Surrey Street (in which he lived) needed repair, he examined the portions that were removed, and was rewarded for his diligence by finding on the back of a piece of wood, which formed part of one of the columns, the following written in reddish colour: "Robert Forstor March 1762." Since the porches would be some of the last portions to be completed, his discovery dates the block 1761. The piece of wood thus discovered is of further interest, because I have read that the name of Robert Forstor appears on the staircase at the Artillery Barracks, and also at the Norwich Union Fire Office.

With regard to Nos. 25 to 27 Surrey Street, the ground on which these were built was leased to Thomas Ivory by the churchwardens of St. Stephen's in 1769, for 200 years, and comprised "6 cottages with a court adjoining, lying together." He agreed, within seven years, to build

Photo by] THE ARTILLERY BARRACKS [*The Author*

or repair the cottages so as to let for £50 a year, a fine of £500 to be enforced if he was in default. A beam in one of the attics bears the date 1773, so that we can assume he complied with the conditions. He was sixty years old at the time, which speaks volumes for the zeal and enterprise of this gifted man. The two houses, Nos. 25 and 27, whilst similar to, and perfectly harmonizing with, those adjoining, have many points in plan and detail which must lead us to think that Ivory's son William took some considerable share in their execution. There are evidences here of the fashion in building which was set by the brothers Adam, a style not seen in any of Thomas Ivory's other work.

The Artillery Barracks

The front of this building, with its forecourt, walls, piers, and railings, though somewhat severe, is a good example of later eighteenth-century work. Knowing that the same carpenter was engaged on this building as on the Surrey Street houses, and that Thomas Ivory was the owner of the site, one naturally expected to find that he was the designer. Through the kindness of the owner in showing me the deeds, I was confirmed in this assumption. It was built in

1771–72, and leased to Miles Branthwayte for twenty-one years at an annual rent of £60.

No. 31 King Street (now demolished)

This building doubtless attracted the attention of many passers-by; its bold and simple dignity marked it out for investigation, and made one curious regarding its authorship.

Mr. E. A. Kent drew my attention to a paragraph in *A Memoir of the late Philip Meadows Martineau*, where it is stated that he passed "the winter in a house built by Mr. Ivory in King Street." The Rev. W. Hudson says that this house was probably built in 1774 for Sir Ed. Astley of Melton Constable, as his town house.

Through the kindness of the present owners, Messrs. Mann, Egerton & Co., I am able to give a view of the exterior. One feature the in treatment of a ceiling inside is quite sufficient to confirm it as the work of Thomas Ivory.

Photo by] NO. 31 KING STREET [*Mann, Egerton & Co., Ltd.*

WILLIAM IVORY

THOMAS IVORY had two sons, of whom, states the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "Thomas was in the Revenue Office, Fort William, Bengal, and William, architect and builder in Norwich, erected a pew in St. Helen's Church in 1780, and died in King Edward VI Almshouses, Saffron Walden, on 11th December, 1837." The last part of this statement is incorrect, as I shall show later.

He was born in 1746, and died about 1801. The first note we have of him is when he was twenty-four years old, in connection with the building of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, for at the Hospital there is a sketch of the proposed building dated 1770 and signed Wm. Ivory. Later on, in the year 1776, the following is entered in the first Minute Book: "The thanks of the General Board given to Mr. Wm. Ivory for his plans, elevations, designs, drawings &c., and for four years superintendence of the Hospital Works, presented as a Benefaction, and that he have a right to recommend as Governor in the same manner as any other gentleman subscribing the said sum (estimated value) of £475."

In 1780 and 1781 William Ivory was appointed Hon. Auditor to the Norfolk and Norwich Infirmary with one other.

The next note we have of him is in the Committee Book of the Proprietors of the Norwich Theatre, where his name is included in the list of Proprietors in 1768. In 1771 he, with Sir Wm. Wiseman and Mr. Jas. Beevor, were appointed to supervise the erection and painting of a new ceiling over the gallery and pit; so that at a comparatively early age he was entrusted with important commissions. In the same Minute Book on August 29, 1777, he is spoken of as Captain Ivory, from which we see that he made time for duties other than those appertaining to his profession. In 1782 he gave a very lengthy, well-worded statement regarding the position of the Proprietors of the Norwich Theatre and the Yarmouth Theatre. It is couched in legal manner, a very difficult problem being very clearly expounded. May 20, 1784, is the last time his name appears in this book.

From one of the Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission we learn that he was commissioned for work in connection with Blickling, as the following extracts show:

"There is a plan for roofing over with a dome

Photo by] ST. HELEN'S PLACE [*Jarrold & Sons, Ltd.*

the outer court at Blickling 1785 with an Estimate £137 13s. 7d. for the stucco work of the ceiling and entablature intended to be done in the great room at Blickling (27th Apl. 1779) William Ivory being the designer and William Wilkins of Norwich proposing to execute by hand the ornamental parts. In the same year Wm. Ivory furnishes designs for the frieze and cornice of the State Dressing Room at Blickling. In March, 1767, according to accounts furnished by Wm. Bailey to the Earl, ten workmen are employed at Blickling pulling down the 'Old Hall' for at least a fortnight under the direction of Mr. Ivory."

That he helped his father with the various works he carried out is fairly certain, but the only other place directly associated with his name in Norwich is the Great Hospital. I have no evidence that St. Helen's Place is his work, but I surmise that it is, and one writer states that he lived there. In St. Helen's Church there is a commodious pew on the west side of the south transept described by Chambers in his *Norfolk Tour* as "built in a successful imitation of the architecture of Henry VI by a journeyman carpenter of the name of Stanford." It has on it the words T. William & Eliz. Mary Ivory, and in the centre a crest with the word "YVERY",

and dated 1780. The Committee in giving leave (August 2, 1780) for this pew to be erected stated, " convenient for his family and servants."

From the foregoing particulars it will be noted that we have records of him in Norwich up to 1784, and if the Blickling reference can be correctly applied to this William Ivory, it carries the date on to 1785. That he was a man of some considerable standing and unquestioned ability in his profession is evident; consequently one is naturally anxious to ascertain the reason for his leaving this City. In view of the statement in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, I expected to find a solution at Saffron Walden, where it is stated that he died in 1837, in King Edward VI Almshouses. Through the good offices of a Mr. Heffer in that town I was supplied with a considerable amount of information about a William Ivory, an architect, whose name first appears there in 1789. References were also given to work he did at Audley End, the seat of Lord Braybrooke, and his tombstone in the churchyard confirmed the date of his death. After a very considerable amount of correspondence had passed between my informant and myself I found, through coming across a copy of William Ivory's will, that the Saffron Walden one was not the same as the subject of this article at all. So far,

Photo by] PEW IN ST. HELEN'S CHURCH [*E. Coe & Son.*

the papers I have been able to find do not show the exact date of, or the reason for, his leaving Norwich. From old deeds I find he was in Ipswich on January 5, 1793, on December 26, 1794, he was in Copford, Essex, and on December 6, 1799, he was in Sproughton, Suffolk (where his will was made). His will bears evidence of considerable wanderings in the Eastern Counties " in the hour of Distress and sorrow when divested of those domestick comforts I had formerly been posessed of." The scrap of paper before alluded to (in the possession of Mr. Johnson) shows that there was a serious family quarrel about the time of William's disappearance from Norwich, but that this explains the reason for his change of life is discounted in his will, where we find he leaves—after certain legacies—all his estate to his brother and sister.

WILLIAM WILKINS

WE have seen in connection with the life of William Ivory that a William Wilkins is mentioned as " plaisterer " doing work at Blickling Hall. Also, in connection with the building of the Octagon Chapel, this same man appears as doing the " Plaisterer's " work to the dome. He was doubtless the father of the individual here under consideration, and the exact similarity in the name and calling of the two would lead one to think that they may very well have been father and son, and furthermore, the following Minute taken from the Great Hospital Committee Book would support the evidence of his birth in St. Benedict's parish as stated hereafter.

" 8 Feb. 1775. Agreed between this Committee and William Wilkins of this City Plaisterer That (upon his Surrendering up the present Lease) he the said William Wilkins shall have a Lease of All the Meſsuage with the Yard Garden and Appurt. in St. Benedicts now in the occupation of the sd. Wm. Wilkins and formerly Demised to John Burroughes from Michas Last for 99

years at the yearly rent of 40s. clear of taxes. The sd. Wm. Wilkins agrees to erect a Dwelling House upon the sd. premises of the value of two Hundred Pounds exclusive of the Stuccoing and Plaistering work upon such plan and with such scantling as shall be approved of by Mr. Aldn. Starling."

From the *Dictionary of Architecture* we learn that William Wilkins, F.S.A., of S. Benedict's Parish, Norwich, was born 1751; had a limited education, but cultivated pursuits, especially drawing, which led to his after success. In 1799 he exhibited at the Royal Academy "a design for improving the seat of a nobleman in Northamptonshire." About 1800 he took the Norwich Theatre (making several alterations in it, refitting the interior and adding a colonnade to the east end) and its circuit, retaining them until his death. In 1792–93 he adapted the Castle at Norwich for the County Gaol, having restored it and Bigod's Tower at the east angle. He also designed additions to Stanfield Hall, Norfolk (Tudor), for the Rev. George Preston, formerly the house of the Flowerdews. He wrote many papers on archæology; and for the *Archæologia*, on the Venta Icenorum of the Romans, and of Norwich Castle, with remarks on the architecture

of the Anglo-Saxons and Normans. He removed about 1780 to Cambridge.

Other works ascribed to this architect are the restoration of the west pediment of St. Ethelbert's Gate and the repair of the whole of the interior of the Cathedral in 1806, when a wash of light colour was bestowed on the stone roof, and other improvements were made under his direction.

His principal association with Norwich was in connection with the old Theatre. In the "Committee Book of the Proprietors of the Theatre" we find that his name first appears when the list of proprietors is given on May 15, 1788. (His father was apparently a proprietor before him, as William Wilkins is in the first list given in 1768.) On January 10, 1799, he asks for a lease and makes proposals for hiring the Norwich Theatre with other theatres belonging to the circuit. These proposals are set out in a very lengthy statement which is thought of sufficient interest to be given in full:

"For some years after the present Theatre of Norwich was built, so much good management & spirit was adopted by the builder, that it was justly considered as the first nursery for Actors in the Kingdom—The names of Reddish, Palmer, Dodd, Bannister, Westen, Moody & Dubellamy

are a few which cannot be forgotten by lovers of the Drama, it must at the same time be regretted, that but few indeed have made their appearance in the metropolis since the original Proprietor transferred the premises, whether this has been occasioned by the inattention or the illiberality of Managers since it is perhaps difficult to judge, it is not however the fault of the Public; for they have even in the hardest times, evinced their fondness for Theatrical exhibition; although it is pretty notorious that their comforts (in all the subsequent alterations that have been made in the House) have been the least consulted—In the Audience part, the Boxes which were separately enclosed, have been opened & in no other respect has there been an alteration or improvement made but when it served to give greater room for filling & increasing the receipt.—The Entrances & Avenues are so ill contrived that only one person can approach the Lobby, a Lady must be separated from the Arm of her Protector both on entering & leaving the Lobby.

"The Audience from the Boxes, Green Boxes & pit are here huddled together & on leaving the House they must pass singly to the Entrance where they are obliged to run the Gauntlet thro' Coachmen, Footmen & Porters & if a carriage is not in readiness at the Door it is almost

impossible to return till the house is nearly emptied, to avoid this bustle & extreme inconvenience, is it not common to see a great part of the Boxes deserted before the end of the Farce ? it is really otherwise impossible that Ladies can reach their Carriages without danger of spoiling their Dresses & being squeezed perhaps between Doorkeepers, Porters & prostitutes who are forcing their way without regard to Beauty or Dress—With respect to the Gallery—one of its approaches being stopped & the remaining Outlet very narrow, makes it very long in emptying on full nights—and there is in consequence a dread which deters many people from entering the House—should there be an alarm only of Fire, this Outlet would be choaked in a few minutes & the destruction of numbers would be the consequence.—

" An alteration has been made in the front of the Stage & the Orchestra, which was before too cramped for the performers, is now become almost intolerable, there is so little room for the Violincello players that they are obliged to be raised so high as to intercept the sight of numbers in the pit, the object obtained by this incautious alteration, gives an additional Seat or two in the pit but as they are of necessity, on the same level with the Seat behind, it is, with the additional

standing room obtained at each end of the Orchestra, the constant cause of disturbance on full nights & of course the greatest interruption of any—The Lobby is so managed, that in it, is a constant assemblage of Doorkeepers Cheque takers & prostitutes, a frequent interruption to the entertainments of the Evening, a number of other inconveniences might also be mentioned, such as the small rise of the Seats in the Boxes and pit, the want of room for the Knees, in sitting &c. &c.—The Audience part of the Theatre is become nearly a scene of darkness & more so in the last 8 or 9 years—As I am now become a Candidate for a Lease, before I offer my terms, I shall promise my ideas of the improvements I think necessary, & which if I am successful, I not only premise but I am ready to engage, for putting into immediate execution after the expiration of the present Lease viz : I propose Gutting the Whole of the Audience part, making a complete Orchestra in length equal to the whole width of the Pit, making the plan of the Boxes a perfect semicircle, giving the Seats so much width & rising the floors so as to give the beholder ease & comfort making the Ingress & Egress commodious, & to this, as the access to the Pit I propose by other passages, the Entrances shall be quite as easy & perhaps even less interrupted than the Approach

to the Assembley rooms—The approach to the Pit I propose under the Box Lobby with a Passage to run at the whole back of the Pit, so that persons without running up & down & across the Lobby as at present, shall not by any means interfere with the approach to the Boxes—they shall also have the opportunity of quitting the house by two Outlets—The Staircase to the Gallery shall be broad and more commodious & shall not interfere with either of the other Approaches & the Gallery shall be accessible by two Inlets—I presume it is unnecessary I should explain the effect of the Audience part of the House by my improvements, it shall be so lighted that Company in the back seats of the Boxes shall appear equally splendid with those on the front Seats & the Chandeliers shall be, as they were before the last Lease was granted, of Glass—The Outside of the House shall yield up its Barn like appearance & shall assume that of a public building.

" With respect to the Stage part of the house I am equally desirous of improving it, at present I confess myself by no means prepared to suggest the whole of the improvements necessary to be done there although I am aware of many that must indispensably be made.—The machinery to the dropping Scenes, I am informed, are dangerous—The furnishing of new Scenes & Wings too are

matters which should keep pace with the improvements in the front of the House, & they shall be done in the best style—It will not I hope be presuming too much on your time, to observe, that since the first erection of the house, the splendor of this part of the entertainments have been gradually decreasing untill, it may be said, there is not a Scene that is worth little more than the Canvas. The first scenes were painted by Colins who was the first Artist in Roman Scenery, the impressions from his Designs to Tasso's Jerusalem now existing are sufficient testimony of his abilities—Afterwards the proprietor engaged Williams who was also an excellent Artist in Forest & Rock Scenery in Barrets management, Hodgings & Luppino, of equal merit in Landscape & Architectural Scenery—Bunn too was kept in constant employ in this department & by his practice under them became a very good Scene Painter indeed—Afterwards a Person who performed the *Whistling of Birds* became chief painter, & since him others of less *Note*, I have heard that it has been done & valued by the yard square.

"The Roof & the Stage are in bad plight, something serious must be done with them.—It is incumbent, of course, on the Landlord to deliver the premises Wind & Water proof to his

incoming Tenant & I flatter myself that the liberal proposals I make will not only entitle me to the preference of the Proprietors but also to their patronage & protection—Should I succeed a Gentleman of Theatrical experience have engaged me his assistance in the Management & with his assistance I have no doubt but we shall soon have a Company of equal merit to those of any of my predecessors.

" I estimate the Improvements to be made at the sum of a Thousand pounds which I propose taking on myself or (if the Proprietors will expend that sum on the Improvements & plans I will suggest I will allow them 150 £s. P Ann.) I will give them a rental, clear, of six hundred pounds p Ann.—equal to Twenty pounds a year on each share—And as at a former meeting the proprietors in consideration of the necessities of Mrs. Barrett, whose Husband it must be admitted was the first who stamped any value whatever on the shares of the Theatre, & in consideration also of her Father having been a very respectable & worthy Majistrate of this City, were pleased to grant her an Annuity of Fifty pounds ; in addition to the rental I have proposed, I will also continue the same Annuity, making together a total Rental of Eight Hundred Pounds per Annum—

" I propose taking the above on Lease for Seven

or Fourteen Years as the Proprietors may please to determine.

"WILLIAM WILKINS."

In 1810 he reported on the theatre at Colchester which was in a ruinous condition, and his proposals for a new building in this case also, were agreed to. He died in 1815, and was buried in St. Giles Church, Cambridge, where there is a marble mural tablet to his memory.

His eldest son, William, was born August 31, 1778, in the parish of St. Giles, Norwich, and was educated at the Norwich Grammar School. According to the *Dictionary of Architecture* he was an M.A., and R.A., and showed great skill as a draughtsman. He did many large and important works in different parts of the country, one of the smaller ones being the Nelson Pillar at Great Yarmouth. He continued as proprietor of the Norwich Theatre after his father's death, and built the new one in 1826, the opening of which he celebrated by giving a party to about 150 ladies and gentlemen in the Green Room, finishing up with a dance on the new stage. A long account is given in the *Norwich Mercury*, of which the following is an extract: "After the scenery had been passed in review, the spectators were introduced to the stage by their courteous

entertainer. A cold collation was served in the scene-room, and the refreshments were rendered more refreshing by exhilarating draughts of sparkling champagne. The highest satisfaction was manifested at the arrangements for the accommodation and amusement of the public." The worries and troubles in connection with his theatrical responsibilities were—according to his brother—contributory causes of his death.

THOMAS RAWLINS

THOMAS RAWLINS was a stonemason by trade, and although we have not many references to him they are such that we may consider him worthy of notice herein. He was admitted a Freeman on April 18, 1747, as a "Freestone Mason," Son of Thomas Rawlins, worsted weaver.

In December, 1753, when the building of the Octagon Chapel was under consideration, Thomas Rawlins, as previously stated, submitted plans at the same time as Mr. Thomas Ivory and Mr. Christopher Lee, and remained in competition with them till the matter was settled. He was not successful in being commissioned to carry this building out, but he did the stonemason's work in connection with it, receiving £386 16s. 6d.

The next reference we have is from the Committee Book of the Great Hospital: 'Ord'd that a Murrall table of Portland Stone with the Ancient Inscription as on a former Table be erected by Mr. Rawlins over the South Entrance of the Great Hosp'l." Later there is a record

that he was ordered to repair the north-east buttress of the Free School.

In 1774 he built the south porch (with room over) of St. Andrew's Hall, and to judge by criticisms it was not a great success, for Chambers, in his *Norfolk Tour*, says : " It was built in a poor style of Gothic Architecture," and Blyth in his *Norwich Guide* says it is " an unmeaning nondescript piece of work, unworthy of forming the entrance to this magnificent hall." It was pulled down at a later date, and the existing one was then erected.

Regarding one of his monuments the *Norwich Mercury* of June 26, 1756, published the following account : " Last Friday Se'night a Marble Monument was finished in the South Isle of the Cathedral for Mr. William Rolfe, an eminent Attorney at Law, which is esteemed by many Judges to be a very neat Piece of Workmanship : It was done by Mr. Thomas Rawlins, Stone-Cutter in this City." This can be seen to-day in the Beauchamp Chapel, to which it was removed in 1893. The excellent design and craftsmanship displayed is sufficient evidence alone to show that this man had exceptional capabilities, others of equal merit can be seen in St. Giles' Church and St. Andrew's Church.

Photo by] WALL MONUMENT IN THE CATHEDRAL [*Jarrold & Sons, Ltd.*

He was not merely a stonecutter : he was the author of a book entitled *Familiar Dialogues on Architecture*, a copy of which is in the Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

CONCLUSION

THE following extracts relating to building matters in the eighteenth century are of interest :

Norwich Mercury, May 21, 1757

"Mr. Thomas Ivory, Carpenter, of this City, is authorized for making the new invented Saſh-Frames, and hanging of Saſhes, which by Letters Patent is granted to Robert Bayns, Carpenter, in London."

The explanation of this is, I think, that the sash window—which was first used in England in the time of Inigo Jones—originally had no cords, pulleys, or weights such as are used to-day, but the lower sash only was raised and fixed by a catch hooking into a series of notches. Late in the seventeenth century the improved method was first used. Regarding the sash window—which was almost universally used in Georgian times—the earlier examples have much stouter bars ; these were diminished in width to a minimum in later years. There are a number of

instances in our streets where these bars have been removed, a practice to be deplored, as it unquestionably goes a long way towards ruining the façade. I have not been able to note a definite date when these windows were first set in a *reveal* in Norwich, but an Act was passed for London in 1709 that they were to be set back from the *face* at least four and a half inches as a precaution against fire.

Norwich Mercury, January 26, 1758

"We whoſe Names are hereunder Subſcrib'd, having carefully examin'd the State of the New Theatre (at the Requeſt of Mr. Thomas Ivory the Proprietor) do teſtify that it is entirely Safe, and that it is impoſſible for any Part of the Building to be mov'd by any Weight or Number of Perſons that it can poſſibly contain. Witneſs our Hands,

"Joſeph Dixon	John Haſtings
John Bennett	Robert De Carle
Peter Chamberlin	Matthew Baltis."

One would imagine from the above notice that unfavourable rumours had been spread around, an emergency which the Proprietor met by calling in three bricklayers and three carpenters

to reassure the citizens. Another point in connection with the old Theatre, the Committee Book records on February 8, 1774, that "An estimate for lighting the House with Candles instead of Oyl be laid before the Committee." Later on it was decided that candles were as expensive as "Oyl," so that the latter was decided on, and Mr. Ivory was desired to write for four barrels "to be sent by Sea immediately." In another place it was ordered "that a Ventilator be fixed up in the Theatre for carrying off the Smoke from the Lamps!"

TWO BUILDERS' ADVERTISEMENTS

Norwich Mercury, October 11, 1756

"JOSEPH DIXON
"CARPENTER and HOUSE-JOYNER,

"Who has for ſeveral Years paſt ſerv'd Mr. Thomas Ivory in the capacity of Foreman, begs leave to inform all Gentlemen and others, that he hath taken the Yard and Stock in St. Martin's at Oak lately occupied by Mr. Thomas Ivory, where he intends to carry on the ſaid Buſineſs in all its Branches: And all Gentlemen who will pleaſe to favour him with their Commands, may

depend on their Buſineſs being done with the utmoſt Expedition, Care and Fidelity.

"N.B. He alſo Plans and Eſtimates for Gentlemen if required."

Norwich Mercury, October 4, 1759

"WHEREAS Mr. Robert Brettingham has declined the Lime Kilns without St. Giles's Gates: This is to give Notice, that the ſame are taken by Robert De Carle, Bricklayer, who intends living there, and hopes for the Continuance of the former Cuſtomers, and all others that pleaſe to make Trial, may depend on having good Lime and full Meaſure, on as reaſonable Terms as at any other Place, and their Commands carefully executed, and gratefully acknowledged by

"Their humble Servant

"Robert De Carle.

"Who likewiſe continues the Bricklaying Buſineſs, and returns Thanks to all who have been ſo kind as to employ him, hoping they will continue their Favours; and all others who pleaſe to employ him therein, may depend on having their Work executed as well and as cheap as by any other Perſon.

"N.B. Large Coals will be ſold at the above Kiln as formerly."

Most advertisements at this time had a special note at the end ; the two above are not without interest.

Norwich Mercury, February 9, 1754

"WILLIAM DAY.

The firſt Inventor of PERPETUAL OVENS and Draught Stoves, from Lambeth Marſh, London.

Is come to the Dolphin Inn in Norwich. His Stay in Town will be no more than our Days, without further Orders."

"N.B. He rarifies cold Air untill it is hot, and conveys it into Gentlemen's Libraries and grand Rooms, ſo that by the hot Air the Damps are diſperſed and the Furniture preſerved many years as freſh as at firſt ; he alſo cures all Sorts of ſmoaky Chimneys, without Contraction ; no Cure no Money."

I think this perpetual oven must be the forerunner of the much-favoured present-day Norfolk oven, or oven in the wall. One wishes that this heating and ventilating expert had given more particulars of his wonderful method. A further interesting point revealed in this advertisement

is the fact that "smoaky chimneys" are no new things. Mr. Day was evidently quite sure of himself; one wishes he had handed on to posterity the secret.

When ingress to, or egress from the City was only possible by way of the old city gates, it is not surprising to find the following notice appearing:

Norwich Mercury, July 5, 1756

"Notice is hereby GIVEN

"That no Carts or Carriages, can paſs thro' MAGDALEN GATES, untill the preſent Repairs are compleated: Of which, Notice will be given in this Paper.

"N.B. There will be a Paſſage left for PAD PEOPLE"

The confined space for building operations in our City was evidently experienced in olden times even as it is to-day.

"NORWICH. At an Adjournment of the Seſſions held the 28th Day of April, 1752

"WHEREAS Complaint hath been this Day

made to the Court of Seſſions, that divers Maſons and Labourers make their Mortar next the Guildhall and other Parts in the Market, to the great annoyance of Shopkeepers and other Inhabitants. It is therefore Ordered, That for the future no Maſon or other Workman do preſume to make Mortar near the Guildhall, or in any publick Streets or Places within the ſaid City, on Pain of being proſecuted as the Law directs. And that no Perſon may plead Ignorance of this Order, the ſame is directed to be advertiſed in the News-Papers of this City for two Weeks to come.

" By the COURT, LODGE.

The black glazed roofing tiles one so frequently sees in this County are a local product, as the following extract indicates, though apparently some were obtained from abroad.

Norwich Mercury, June 28, 1760

" To be SOLD.

" At Carrow-Abbey Staithe, near Conisford Gates.

NORWICH,

" By Mr. WILLIAM HUDSON,

" Glaz'd and red Pan-Tiles, glaz'd and ſquare

ditto, glaz'd and red Roofing ditto, from Mr. Philip Walker's Kiln at Gunton, near Loweſtoft. Where may be had, all Sorts of common white and red Ware, and if timely beſpoke, white Copings, Corniſh and Faſcia's to any Mould or Pattern, that nearly reſembles Portland Stone.

"N.B. The Pan-Tiles are (by good Judge) thought equal if not ſuperior to the Holland Ware and the ſquare glazed are eſteemed the neateſt and moſt beautiful Covering of it's kind ever yet invented."

An indication of the method of proceeding with a building project in the middle of the eighteenth century is conveyed in the following:

"NORWICH, March 24, 1752

"THE Committee appointed for the Rebuilding of Bridewell give Notice, that a Plan and Scantlings for that Purpoſe are left at Mr. JAMES STONE'S on Tombland, where all Workmen who are inclined to undertake the ſaid Building, may inſpect the ſaid Plan and Scantlings, in order to be ready to ſend their Propoſals in Writing ſealed up to the ſaid Mr. STONE, on or before Friday the 10th of April at Noon,

and ſuch Workmen are deſired to be particular in their Menſurations and Valuations."

Norwich Mercury, July 31, 1756

"There is a Call for Journeymen BRICKLAYERS and LABOURERS at Wisbech, If they apply to GEORGE SWAINE, they may enter into immediate Buſineſs; the pay for Bricklayers is 10s. per Week, but if they merit more they ſhall have it: Labourers Wages is 7s. per Week, while Buſineſs continues."

Times have indeed altered during the last 170 years.

INDEX

Artillery Barracks, 12, 34, 35
Assembly Rooms, 12, 25

Beauchamp Chapel, 54
Blickling, 38, 39
Brettingham, Matthew, 2
Brettingham, Robert Furze, 5
Brettingham, Robert, 6, 9, 20, 59
Bridewell, 63
Browne, P., 3

Cambridge, 44
Cathedral, 44
Chambers, 39
Charlton House, 3
Chimney, smoaky, 32, 60
Colchester, 29, 51
Copford, 41
Cumberland House, 3

Day, William, 60, 61
De Carle, Robert, 57, 59
Dixon, Joseph, 58

Elm Hill, 9

Forstor, Robert, 34

Great Hospital, 3, 11, 12, 19, 39

Holkham Hall, 2

Ipswich, 41
Ivory, J., 14
Ivory, Thomas, 1, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 26, 31, 57
Ivory, William, 11, 27, 31, 37

Johnson, F., 13, 41

Kent, William, 2
King Street, 12, 36

Langley Park, 3
Lee, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Methodist Meeting House, 12, 16
Morris, Robert, 22, 23

Nelson Pillar, 51
Norfolk House, 2
Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, 37
Norwich Mercury, 15, 17, 51, 54, 56, 64

Octagon Chapel, 6, 12, 19

Rawlins, Thos., 21, 23, 53

Sash-frames, 56
Shirehouse, 3, 4
Sproughton, 41
Stanfield Hall, 43
Stone, James, 63

St. Andrew's Hall, 54
St. Andrew's Church, 54
St. Augustine's Church, 3, 4
St. Benedict's, 43
St. Ethelbert's Gate, 44
St. Giles' Church, 9, 54
St. Helen's Place, 39
St. Helen's Church, 39
St. Martin's-at-Oak, 15
Surrey Street, 12, 33
Theatre, 12, 27, 43, 44, 57
Tingey, J. C., 34
Tiles, Pan-, 62
Wilkins, William (arch.), 4, 33, 43, 51
Wilkins, William (plaisterer), 39, 41, 42
Wilkins, William (arch.), Jun., 51

GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
3 3125 01717 3408